



## **BOARD OF GOVERNORS President's Quarterly Progress Report: October – December 2011**

### **1. Board Matters**

The Honourable Burchell Whiteman led the COL delegation to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Perth, Australia in October. Following that, he attended the Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) in Auckland, New Zealand from November 1-3, 2011 which was co-hosted by the Wellington Institute of Technology represented by Dr. Linda Sissons.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Audit Committee was held via teleconference on November 23, 2011 where the audited consolidated financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2011 were approved. The financial statements are available at [www.col.org/GovInfo](http://www.col.org/GovInfo).

### **2. General**

The highlight of this quarter was the CHOGM in Perth at which Australia rejoined COL as a financial partner. I comment further on this event below. We also held a regional meeting for COL's country focal points in the Pacific, the fourth and final event in the series. Quite apart from their function of informing us of country priorities to guide COL's planning, these meetings are valued by the participants as a chance to review regional developments through the lenses of educational technology and ODL. I was delighted that our Chair, The Honourable Burchell Whiteman, was able to attend this event in Auckland on his way back from CHOGM, along with colleagues from COL. We are most grateful to Dr. Linda Sissons and our New Zealand hosts for their excellent arrangements.

As I look back on the whole of 2011, as well as its last quarter, I am very satisfied by the progress that COL is making. This is captured well in Patrick Spaven's External Evaluation. As COL has become more ambitious and focussed Dr. Spaven has, rightly, taken to judging us by more demanding criteria. I know that his assessments have achieved their aim of stimulating my professional colleagues to think even harder about where they can achieve the most widespread and beneficial impact among the many options for intervention open to them.

I am struck by the increasing demands being made on COL by other international bodies as our reputation for effectiveness and relevance grows. Professor Kanwar, Dr. Balaji and my Education Specialist colleagues are much in demand as speakers and members of advisory committees, while COL itself is becoming a partner of choice for

projects such as the Commonwealth Secretariat's C2P Development Portal, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's thrust to integrate Open Educational Resources into government policy, and the Teacher Education Initiative of the Organisation de la Francophonie.

## **2.1 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)**

CHOGM and its ancillary events were held in Perth in the week of October 24. The Chair and I made a presentation to the Foreign Ministers Committee on October 27, after which the Australian Foreign Minister, the Honourable Kevin Rudd, announced that Australia would rejoin COL as a financial partner. We later learned that the Australian contribution will be AUD500,000 for each of the next two years, after which a review will be conducted to determine the level of future contributions.

This is very good news and represents the successful culmination of a campaign that we initiated as soon as Australia withdrew from funding COL in 2004. As well as substantially improving COL's overall effectiveness over the intervening years, we have devoted more attention to the Pacific Region and particularly to the countries of special concern to Australia, such as Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

We are indebted to the Secretary-General, to Board member Dame Carol Kidu and to an extensive network of Australian friends who have campaigned tirelessly to persuade Australia to join the 44 countries that make voluntary contributions to COL.

The People's Forum, which takes place alongside CHOGM, was not up to its usual standard, largely because the Commonwealth Foundation, which organises it, was in a state of flux. COL will need to be more pro-active, in the run-up to this event at the next CHOGM, to ensure that adequate attention is given to education.

COL should also review the size of its delegation to future CHOGMs. Whereas the CHOGM should be an opportunity for all Commonwealth bodies to celebrate the organisation, COL's opportunities to observe and participate in the various events were severely restricted by Commonwealth Secretariat officials, often to the point of making us feel that COL was there on sufferance. At an appropriate moment the Chair plans to raise this matter with the Secretary-General, who has always showed great goodwill towards COL.

We are delighted that the Government of Canada has appointed Senator Hugh Segal as a special envoy to the Commonwealth. He was an active member of the Eminent Persons Group that reported to CHOGM in Perth and this appointment will give him the opportunity to continue to promote the Group's reform agenda.

## **2.2 Open Educational Resources (OER)**

I devoted a section to OER in my last Quarterly Report but make no apology for returning to the theme. Apart from being an intrinsically important way of bringing

technology into the mainstream of education, it is an area where COL is cast in a leadership role.

The joint COL/UNESCO project *Fostering Governmental Support for OER Internationally*, for which COL has received USD500,000 from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (WFHF), is now well engaged. I happened to be at UNESCO, launching our joint *Guidelines for OER in Higher Education* at the 36<sup>th</sup> General Conference, on the day when the vote to admit Palestine to full membership of the organisation was taken. This precipitated the immediate withdrawal of US funding to UNESCO, which is now implementing budget cuts of up to 30%.

In these circumstances it seems fortunate that the WFHF made the grant to COL rather than to UNESCO! Although significant in-kind contributions from UNESCO were built into our project budget, I do not believe that the project will be adversely affected. A worldwide survey of governments on their policy intentions with respect to OER, which is being conducted by COL, the OECD and UNESCO, is already under way. We shall hold policy forums in each of UNESCO's regions between now and the World OER Congress in Paris in June 2012. On December 19, I co-chaired, with the UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Communications & Information, Janis Karklins, the first meeting of the International Advisory and Liaison Group (IALG) that we have established to guide the project. It is made up of governments identified by each of UNESCO's electoral groups and representatives of IGOs (OECD) and NGOs (Creative Commons, OER Africa).

This first meeting of the IALG was positive and productive, resulting in a first draft of a declaration on OER that will be presented to the World OER Congress in June 2012 after being refined in the regional policy forums already mentioned.

### **2.3 President's Activities**

In addition to the events noted above, I was honoured to be invited to meet the Governor-General of Canada, the Rt. Honourable David Johnston, at Government House in Ottawa on October 4. He has made 'Learning & Innovation' one of the themes of his mandate and discussion of these topics gave me an opportunity to brief him about COL's work.

Malaysia is something of a pacesetter in educational policy-making. Having established schools and tertiary education as the first two pillars of its education system, it has now identified Lifelong Learning as the third pillar. I gave the opening address at an international conference on lifelong learning in Kuala Lumpur, at which the Minister launched the country's *Blueprint on Enculturation of Lifelong Learning in Malaysia 2011-2020*. My address summarised three of COL's projects in lifelong learning: Flexible Skills Development (Alison Mead Richardson); Lifelong Learning for Farmers (Dr. Balasubramanian Kodhandaraman) and the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) (John Lesperance).

On the way back from this event, I stopped in Singapore for the opening ceremony of a three-week VUSSC training and course development workshop for a Masters programme on Educational Leadership. This was the VUSSC's most ambitious workshop to date and, once again, we received superb support from the Government of Singapore and the National Institute of Education, where the workshop was held.

In early December, I was pleased to be invited to speak at the Brookings Institution in a seminar on Secondary Education. COL has been working for some years to alert the international development community to the crisis that looms as the relative success of the campaign for Universal Primary Education creates a tidal wave of children seeking secondary schooling. I explained how the improvement and expansion of open schooling could provide part of the solution.

### **3. Programme**

Two major triennial activities were completed during this quarter: first, the External Evaluation of the current programme (2009-2012) and, second, the first draft of the next Three Year Plan 2012-2015. Both activities have benefited from advanced and systematic planning with participation from internal and external stakeholders.

The Evaluation exercise began with the commissioning of longitudinal studies for each initiative in 2009-2010, continuing with a mid-term stakeholder survey in November 2010 and the final external evaluation process which started in July 2011.

The process for developing the next Three-Year Plan started in April 2010 with a full-day staff session, followed by wide stakeholder consultations at PCF6 in November 2010, the Board of Governors retreat in June 2011 and the four Regional Focal Points meetings covering the Caribbean, Africa/Mediterranean, Asia and the Pacific held over the course of 2011. The draft Three-Year Plan, stakeholder survey and reports from regional meetings of Focal Points are open for wider discussion and feedback, available at [www.col.org/Draft3YP](http://www.col.org/Draft3YP).

Patrick Spaven's draft full evaluation of the 2009-2012 Planning period is now also with Board members for review.

In addition, COL's initiative managers have been working to ensure that the programme is on track across all regions. Following Australia's return, the announcement of the priorities of the NZAID strategic plan and the results of the mid-term stakeholder survey, there will be an emphasis on improving our impact in the Pacific, by targeting women, girls and youth and developing a substantive activity for the medium-term in each Member State.

As this is the final year of the current TYP (ending June 30, 2012), our emphasis is on fast-tracking the activities that will help us to achieve and, in some cases exceed, the stated outcomes and performance targets.

### **3.1 Education Sector**

#### *3.1.1 Open Schooling*

During this quarter, open schooling events were held in Africa and the Pacific. Under the OER4OS (Open Educational Resources for Open Schooling) activity we are working with course editors to see that the recommendations of the Evaluation Report are implemented to ensure that the OER are of good quality.

Making available the complete set of Entrepreneurship materials in Braille and the Life Sciences materials in the Daisy format has helped to reach visually challenged learners in Namibia. In Tanzania, the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) held a workshop to build the capacity of 25 faculty members to develop multi-media lessons.

The Forum on Open Schooling in the Pacific was a resounding success. The forum participants developed a generic framework for introducing new Open Schools. Establishing Open Schools was compared to making a *tapa* cloth, a long and arduous process that involves pounding the inner bark of the mulberry tree until it becomes flat, before pieces are joined together. When the islanders *ʻhōnkō* (beat) the *tapa*, the sound of hammering mallets creates a concert. Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga have started the Open Schooling rhythm and we are confident that the beat will be heard across the region.

#### *3.1.2 Teacher Education*

The teacher education initiative has continued to focus on capacity building, materials development and quality assurance. Over 200 head teachers and principals of schools in The Gambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone were trained in innovative strategies and techniques of school management so as to enhance their effectiveness as school managers. Similarly, in India, 400 master trainers were trained in the integrated use of ICT in teaching. This was part of the partnership between COL and Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey (SNDT) Women's University, Mumbai, and will result in the further training of 4,200 teachers in the colleges affiliated to the university. In the Caribbean, strategies for ensuring widespread support and implementation of the CARICOM Academic and Professional Standards were developed at a workshop held in Trinidad & Tobago.

#### *3.1.3 Higher Education*

A COL supported institutional audit using the COL Review and Improvement Model (COLRIM) was completed at the National Institute of Health & Social Studies Seychelles during this quarter.

Three workshops were organised on: dual mode provision for academics and course writers of the National Law University, Jodhpur, India; leadership in higher education institutions at the Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode; and case-based pedagogy in ODL at Wawasan Open University, Malaysia. The Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDOL) published the first issue of its

research journal and organised a regional workshop on Research Methods in ODL in Ghana for academics in West Africa. An ODL policy Roundtable for Ghana was also conducted in November under the aegis of RETRIDOL.

### *3.1.4 Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)*

The focus of the VUSSC remains capacity building, materials development and course delivery. The National University of Samoa (NUS) has started to use the Diploma in Agriculture programme that was developed in Maldives in March 2010. After appropriate contextualisation, NUS has integrated elements of this programme into its Diploma in Teacher Education and is offering it to learners who want to become agricultural teachers. Principals, directors, heads of faculties and senior officials from 16 small states came together in an international training and materials development workshop held at the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore with support from the Government of Singapore, to develop learning materials in educational leadership at the master's level.

## **3.2 Livelihoods & Health Sector**

### *3.2.1 Skills Development*

COL's Skills Development initiative has built ODL capacity in three Commonwealth regions this quarter with over 180 participants. In the Pacific and India, partners are engaged in adapting existing programmes for distance delivery to train Community Development workers and volunteers. In Africa, TVET managers and teachers from six countries are continuing with online training through the COL Learning Management System and specialised workshop training in producing audio and video learning materials. At the request of the Kenyan Ministry of Education, training in competency-based education and training for TVET stakeholders has been provided.

### *3.2.2 Learning for Farmers*

The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) reported an increase in the production of turmeric and ginger among the farmers involved in the Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) initiative. A study of the 300 women learners of the financial literacy course of the *Mann Deshi* Foundation, Maharashtra, India, concluded that more than 90% of the women have started saving regularly and around 50% of the participants have obtained loans for agricultural enterprises.

During this quarter, 841 farmers in the Kabale district of Uganda went through the ODL course on community banking and agriculture and formed 25 Self-Help Groups. The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) in India conducted a training programme for more than 30 participants from L3F initiatives in Tamil Nadu on content development. Some students at Queens University, Canada, and the Kenya AIDs Intervention Prevention Project Group (KAIPPG) have developed a back-yard poultry business and credit management plan for the L3F participants in Western Kenya, an interesting example of north-south collaboration.

### 3.2.3 *Healthy Communities*

This initiative focused on south-south collaboration to build design and innovation capacities related to community ODL. In Nairobi, the Kenya Community Media Network and Farm Radio International's office in Tanzania picked up COL's training module from the Online Toolkit on *Integrating Mobile Telephones* and carried out a three-day workshop for 15 community development and media groups from different parts of Kenya.

Staff from the Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication in Jamaica worked with 15 representatives of the Ministry of Health, the local Garifuna community, local development stakeholders and the Hamalali Community Radio in the Dangriga district of Belize to design a new programme on maternal health.

Maraa, a media collective based in Bangalore, India, and the Regional Media Centre of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community worked together with World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters to run a workshop on developing participatory learning programmes for 14 community broadcasting trainers and managers from the Asia/Pacific region in Bangkok. COL was more directly involved in facilitating the design of a new phase of the *Bogunvil Mere Tede* (Bougainville Women Today) programme on women's health in Papua New Guinea.

### 3.2.4 *Integrating eLearning*

Deans of Education of 10 higher education institutions in Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa came together to develop institutional visions for ICT integration in Teacher Education Institutions (TEI). ICT in Education planning meetings and workshops have taken place in St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Trinidad & Tobago that resulted in the development of implementation plans to build teachers' capacity in ICT integration. Mentor training and consultation with governments and teacher training institutions in Antigua & Barbuda and The Bahamas were held to implement the Commonwealth Certificate for Teachers' ICT Integration (CCTI). Two training workshops on the implementation of the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers' Technology Literacy strand have taken place in Guyana. A research study done in Guyana outlines the steps required to replicate or adapt the Guyana model for teacher training in other Caribbean countries.

### 3.2.5 *eLearning in International Organisations (eLIO)*

This quarter saw the full migration of 90% of eLIO courses to delivery via the COL-VLE (virtual learning environment) based on a MOODLE platform – an open source Learning Management System (LMS). It is a robust and simple platform providing one-stop access to eLIO's globally based learners for materials, communication with their tutors and fellow learners, assignment submissions and marked assignment retrieval. It also enables the eLIO team to monitor tutor performance, learner progress and learning completion anytime anywhere.

### 3.3 CEMCA

This quarter has seen significant developments in promoting OER and supporting the development of community radio in the region.

CEMCA, in partnership with Uttarakhand Open University, Doon, and Graphic Era University organised an international workshop on *ICT initiatives, policies and governance* in Dehradun during the last week of November. The highlight of the meeting was the Vice Chancellor's conclave, chaired by the Vice-President of COL at which 12 vice chancellors from India interacted with ICT experts from India, Malaysia and Singapore and developed a road map for sharing OERs and developing capacity in the development and re-use of OER.

In two workshops for grassroots community broadcasters held in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra over 30 women were trained. Two Awareness Consultations on Community Radio (CR) supported by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting were held in Ranchi and Jammu where over 50 potential applicants, drawn from institutions and NGOs across India, were oriented towards the concept and process of effective community radio.

During this period, CEMCA also facilitated the launch of seven Internet Radios (one in Bangladesh and six in India) on a build-operate-transfer basis which helps the stations to reach out to a much wider geographically scattered audience than terrestrial transmissions.

### 3.4 Vice-President's Activities

The Vice-President has represented COL as an invited speaker at a number of global forums. In October she spoke on *OER in Higher Education: Issues and Challenges* at a Wawasan Open University-UNESCO-COL workshop in Penang, Malaysia. She sent a video recording of her keynote on *Can Open Educational Resources transform education? A developing world perspective* to a conference organised by the Ministry of Education and Culture, Reykjavik, Iceland, to increase awareness of OER among Icelandic educators. These videos were recorded and edited in-house by COL's Knowledge Management team and available online at [www.col.org/videos](http://www.col.org/videos).

Professor Kanwar was invited to deliver a keynote address on *Democratising Education through OER: the Commonwealth Experience* at the International Conference on eLearning (ICeL) in Bandung, Indonesia. She also gave a keynote at the international workshop on *ICT initiatives, Policies and Governance* in Dehradun, and the valedictory speech at the National Institute of Open Schooling workshop held in Delhi in December. This was followed by a convocation address at the oldest women's university in South Asia, the SNDT Women's University, Mumbai, India.

### **3.5 Professional Development**

Dr. Hisham Bin Dzakiria, an Associate Professor at Universiti Utara Malaysia's College of Arts & Sciences, has joined COL for a 12-month attachment. He is sponsored by the Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia as a post-doctoral placement and will work in the areas of higher education and teacher training.

COL supported two conferences during this quarter by sponsoring the participation of delegates from developing Commonwealth countries: the 24<sup>th</sup> ICDE World Conference on Open and Distance Learning, *Expanding Horizons – New Approaches to Open and Distance Learning*, hosted by Universitas Terbuka in Bali, Indonesia in October; and the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on eLearning (iCEL 2011) *Optimizing and Empowering Online Education*, hosted by i-Learn Centre, Universiti Teknologi MARA in Bandung, Indonesia in November.

COL sponsored Mr. James Onyango, Executive Director of Kenya Aids Intervention Prevention Project Group (KAIPPG) to attend the Commonwealth Peoples' Forum, held in Perth, Australia, from October 25-27, 2011. KAIPPG is a key partner in COL's Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) activity.

## **4. Stakeholder Relations**

### **4.1 Member Governments Support**

So far this fiscal year, contributions have been received from 31 countries. In this quarter we received funds from Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Botswana, Cyprus, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Nauru, St. Kitts & Nevis, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tonga, United Kingdom and Zambia.

Australia confirmed at CHOGM in October 2011 that it will be re-joining COL as a financial partner. The level of its contributions will be AUD500,000 for each of the next two years with a review at the end of the two-year period to determine future funding levels.

### **4.2 Focal Points**

The Regional Focal Points Meeting for the Pacific was held in Auckland, New Zealand from November 1-3, co-hosted by the Wellington Institute of Technology, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Asha Kanwar, Frances Ferreira and Ian Pringle acted as facilitators. Seven Focal Points from ten Pacific Commonwealth countries attended the meeting. This was the last of four regional meetings of Focal Points that were convened in order to gather input for our next Three-Year Plan. Reports from the meetings are available through COL's website at [www.col.org/FocalPoints](http://www.col.org/FocalPoints).

Following the departure of Mr Auckbur Ricaud to another ministry, Mr. Vishnoorow Luximon, Acting Director, Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research & Technology, has been nominated as the new Focal Point for Mauritius.

### 4.3 Congratulatory Letters

Thirteen congratulatory letters were sent to newly appointed Heads of Government, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Ministers of Education, Commonwealth High Commissioners in Canada and Heads of Institutions.

## 5. Finances

### 5.1 Revenue

COL has received voluntary contributions of \$6.5 million from 31 member governments to date towards the budget for 2011-2012 (at December 31, 2010 ó \$7.1 million from 30 countries). Of these 31, the following 17 contributed during this second quarter: Antigua & Barbuda ó \$5,013; The Bahamas ó \$60,000; Bangladesh ó \$31,164; Barbados ó \$45,000; Botswana ó \$45,783; Cyprus ó \$16,606; Ghana ó \$60,000; Kenya ó \$43,760; Lesotho ó \$71,603; Mozambique ó \$50,000; Nauru ó \$5,000; St. Kitts & Nevis ó \$30,000; Sierra Leone ó \$15,450; South Africa ó \$250,000; Tonga ó \$20,068; United Kingdom ó \$1,768,030; and Zambia ó \$30,522.

The funds received to date represent close to 81% of the level forecasted from member governments for 2011-2012 (\$8 million). In 2010-2011, a total of \$7.9 million was contributed by member governments.

In addition to member government funding, COL is forecasting additional contributions from grants of \$1.2 million and from fee-for-service activities of over \$0.5 million.

COL has entered into new funding agreements this quarter with the following organisations:

- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation for *Fostering Governmental Support for Open Educational Resources Internationally* ó the agreement for the second tranche has now been signed (USD350,000).
- Commonwealth Secretariat ó to support a capacity building programme for multi-grade teaching (£13,050).
- World Bank ó a one-year agreement for delivering the Report Writing for Distance Learning course (USD169,000).
- UNHCR ó an 18-month agreement to deliver the Operational Data Management Learning Programme (USD153,180 with USD107,000 applying to this fiscal year and the balance in the next year).
- WHO ó to deliver a Writing Effectively course to one cohort starting in March 2012 (\$45,165).

These sources, together with amounts recognised in the first quarter from grants and fee-for-service activities and contracted work in progress, will contribute towards achieving the target set for additional contributions. COL continues to source new revenue streams to support its programme work on an on-going basis.

## **5.2 Cash Flow**

COL estimates its cash position at the end of December 2011 to be around \$9 million before current liabilities of approximately \$2.5 million.

In addition, COL continues to maintain a cash reserve of \$3.3 million to provide a source of funds for unexpected expenses and shortfalls in funding and a term deposit of \$150,000 as banking security.

## **5.3 Expenditures**

An estimated \$4.4 million was spent in the first half of the year to meet programme and organisational management activities, staff costs and office costs. Another \$1.4 million is committed for work in progress. These levels are similar to the same period last year. The annual budget for 2011-2012 of \$11.39 million is inclusive of additional contribution activities and capital expenditures.

## **6. Human Resources**

### **6.1 Staff Changes**

#### *6.1.1 Arrivals*

There were no new staff arrivals in the second quarter.

#### *6.1.2 Movements*

Ms. Rebecca Kinakin, Project Manager for the UNICEF-Child Friendly School grant activity, left COL on December 2, 2011 to take up a position in Papua New Guinea with Care Australia.

#### *6.1.3 Recruitment*

Dr. Nutan Bharati will join CEMCA on February 1, 2012 as Programme Officer ó Education.

Dr. S. Arulselvan was not able to take up the position of Programme Officer ó Education at CEMCA on October 17, 2011 as announced last quarter.

## **7. Information Technology & Knowledge Management**

### **7.1 Partnership with the Commonwealth Connects Portal (C2P)**

The online, web-based directory on OER for the Commonwealth Connects Portal is a substantial service. It now includes 1,167 full courses at the post-secondary, college or university levels. Each course description is tagged for its educational value in addition to its subject matter specificity. The EduTags on this service render it unique among a host of online directories on OER. It emerges that developing countries of the Commonwealth are large producers of OER at the college or university level, notable ones being India, Nigeria and South Africa. The UK is a large contributor of OER among the developed countries. These four countries have produced nearly 85% of the OER accessible via the COL directory. This service is currently accessible via the Commonwealth C2 Portal launched during CHOGM 2011.

### **7.2 Open Source platform for COL publications**

Consistent with international academic practices for the development of Institutional Repositories, COL has designed a repository using the Open Source DSpace platform. It is accessible at <http://dspace.col.org>. All COL publications since 1989 are now available in full-text format via this service. The IRC updates this service regularly as new publications are brought out. Pre-prints are provided in full text where the publication is in a professional magazine or journal. COL is among the small number of global development organisations to have its own Institutional Repository in the public domain.

### **7.3 IT Systems**

An advanced trial version of a new COL Intranet has been developed on SharePoint 2010. The trial version includes a document repository with semantically enabled search features. Important applications such as the Event Reports have been ported successfully to this platform. A major update of the virtual servers in COL was completed in this quarter.

### **7.4 Other**

- Leaders of a Consortium of ODL institutions from India (IGNOU, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) and Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU) spent a week at COL undergoing training in the design and development of highly granular learning materials for farmers and received advice in the management of their trial OER repository. The costs of this training were fully supported by the Government of India.
- The LIVES (Learning through Interactive Voice Educational Systems) software developed jointly by COL and the University of British Columbia was successfully commissioned in the servers at ICRISAT (International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics) in India and a user group workshop was held in November 2011 to launch the large scale trials.

- LIVES was also on active display during the UNESCO Mobile Learning Week in December for a global audience and received significant attention from members of developing country delegations. A version of LIVES was ported to a laptop exclusively for this purpose by the University of British Columbia.
- Exchanges of ideas and conversations with UNESCO and Creative Commons are taking place on the deployment of open licenses for the OER of Intergovernmental Organisations.

## **8. Seventh Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF7)**

We are in continuing discussion and beginning planning for PCF7 with the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) as the lead institutional partner representing the Federal Ministry of Education.

A local organising committee chaired by Professor Mba O. Okoronkwo (NOUN's Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic) has begun to meet. The Forum is to take place in Abuja from November 18-22, 2013.

## **9. Visitors to COL**

Some of the visitors to COL during this quarter include:

- Dr. Wayne Mackintosh, Director, OER Foundation and Director, International Centre for Open Education at Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand.
- Dr. Praveen K. Jain, School of Agriculture, IGNOU; Dr. Surya K. Gunjal, Director, School of Agriculture, Maharashtra Open University and Dr. Valluva Pari Dasan, Director for ODL, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.
- Her Excellency Sheila Sealy-Monteith, Jamaica High Commissioner to Canada and Ms. Wilma King-Bennett, Jamaica Honorary Council, Vancouver.
- Ms. Brenda Aynsley (Chair) and Mr. Roger Johnson, IFIP International Professional Practice Partnership (IP3), Australia.
- Ms. Syliva van Ziegert, Learning Officer, HRSLO-Writing and Speaking Skills Program, The World Bank Group.
- The Honourable Margaret Mensah-Williams, Vice Chairperson of the National Council & Coordinator of Committees, Namibia; The Honourable Sipapela, Chairperson of Habitat Committee; The Honourable Tobias, Chairperson of Regional Development and Reports Committee; The Honourable Katamelo, Chairperson of the Audit Committee; Mrs. Wilmary Tsamareb, Chief Legal Counsel of the National Council; and Ms. Mirjam Nakutwina, Administrative Assistant.
- Dr. Louise Bertand, Chargée de mission, IFADEM and Papa Youga Dieng, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie.
- The Honourable Mary Collins, Africa/Canadian Emerging Leaders Dialogue (and former Canadian cabinet minister).

## **10. Publications/Resources**

The following is a list of recent publications and resources:

- *Connections/EdTech News*, October 2011, Vol. 16, No. 3 ([www.col.org/connections](http://www.col.org/connections)).
- *Guidelines for Open Educational Resources (OER) in Higher Education*, co-published with UNESCO.
- *Instructional Design Tool*, CD-ROM and PDF, developed for COL by Dr. Roger Powley.
- *COLø Resource CD-ROM*, updated.
- *COLø Report to the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)*.

These resources are available at [www.col.org/publications](http://www.col.org/publications).

See also:

- [www.col.org/speeches](http://www.col.org/speeches).
- [www.col.org/blog](http://www.col.org/blog).
- [www.col.org/videos](http://www.col.org/videos).

*All currencies are in Canadian dollars unless otherwise indicated.*

*Sir John Daniel  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
December 31, 2011*